

coffer into the Nile. This happened on the seventeenth day of the month Athyr, when the sun is in the sign of the Scorpion, and in the eight-and-twentieth year of the reign or the life of Osiris. When Isis heard of it she sheared off a lock of her hair, put on mourning attire, and wandered disconsolately up and down, seeking the body.¹

By the advice of the god of wisdom she took refuge in the papyrus swamps of the Delta. Seven scorpions accompanied her in her flight. One evening when she was weary she came to the house of a woman, who, alarmed at the sight of the scorpions, shut the door in her face. Then one of the scorpions crept under the door and stung the child of the woman that he died. But when Isis heard the mother's lamentation, her heart was touched, and she laid her hands on the child and uttered her powerful spells ; so the poison was driven out of the child and he lived. Afterwards Isis herself gave birth to a son in the swamps. She had conceived him while she fluttered in the form of a hawk over the corpse of her dead husband. The infant was the younger Horns, who in his youth bore the name of Harpocrates, that is, the child Horus. Him Buto, the goddess of the north, hid from the wrath of his wicked uncle Set. Yet she could not guard him from all mishap ; for one day when Isis came to her little son's hiding-place she found him stretched lifeless and rigid on the ground : a

scor help. The god hearkened to her and
pion staid his bark
had in the sky, and sent down Thoth to
stun teach her the spell by
g which she might restore her son to
him. life. She uttered the
Then words of power, and straightway the
Isis poison flowed from
pray the body of Horus, air passed into him,
ed to and he lived. Then
the Thoth ascended up into the sky and
sun-took his place once
god more in the bark of the sun, and the
Ra bright pomp passed
for onward jubilant²

¹ Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris* ^ 13 sq.

² A. Erman, *Aegypten und
aegyptisch&s Leben in Altertum* ^ p.
366;
id.) *Die egyptische Religion* ³
(Berlin,
1909), p. 40; A. Wiedemann,
*Religion
of the Ancient Egyptians*
(London,
1897), pp. 213 sq., E. A. Wallis
Budge,
The Gods of the Egyptians, i. 487
sq.,

ii. 206-211; *id.*, *O sins and the
Egyptian
Resurrection* (London, 1911), i. 92-
96,
ii. 84, 274-276. These incidents
of
the scorpions are not related by
Plutarch
but are known to us from Egyptian
sources. The barbarous legend of
the
begetting of Horus by the dead
Osiris
is told in unambiguous language in
the